

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR UR NATO

SUBJ: NEW SOVIET TACK ON FREE EXCHANGE OF PEOPLES

AND IDEAS

REF: STATE 170972

1. WE SHARE CONCLUSION CONTAINED REFTEL THAT LATEST SOVIET TACK ON FREE EXCHANGE OF PEOPLES AND IDEAS AS OUTLINED IN BREZHNEV'S ALMA ATA SPEECH, AND REITERATED BY YURI ZHUKOV, DOES NOT SIGNAL DECISION TO REMOVE TRADITIONAL SOVIET BARRIERS TO OUTSIDE INFLUENCE. ACCORDINGLY, IT CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO RESULT IN MAJOR SHIFT IN SOVIET HANDLING OF CSCE IN GENERAL OR BASKET III QUESTIONS IN PARTICULAR.

2. THAT PASSAGE IN BREZHNEV SPEECH WAS SIGNIFICANT PRIMARILY IN DOMESTIC CONTEXT, AS ATTEMPT TO PLACE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ISSUE IN ACCEPTABLE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND TO DE-EMPHASIZE THE DAMGERS AND THE NEED FOR DEFENSIVE STANCE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADERSHIP UNDOUBTEDLY FEELS IT WILL BE EASIER TO JUSTIFY TO DOMESTIC CRITICS ANY MINIMAL CONCESSION WHICH SOVIETS INTEND TO MAKE TO WESTERN SENSITIVITIES ON BASKET III ISSUES.1

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EM DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT SOVIETS HAVE

NO INTENTION OF LOOSENING INTERNAL CONTROLS. CURRENT TRIAL OF DISSIDENTS YAKIR AND KRASIN AND HEAVY PRESS ATTACKS ON NUCLEAR PHYSICIST SAKHAROV AND WRITER SOLZHENITSYN AMPLIFIED EVIDENCE THAT REGIME DOES NOT INTEND TO COUNTENANCE INTERNAL DISSENT BOTH FOR DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS. HOW THE ISSUE OF INTERNAL CONTROL IS DESCRIBED IN THE OFFICIAL PRESS, HOWEVER, VARIES ACCORDING TO THE OUTLOOK OF THE SOURCE. THE HARD LINER WILL EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR VIGILANCE AGAINST THE PENETRATION OF BOURGEOIS IDEAS; ON THE OTHER HAND, BREZHNEV AT ALMA ATA SUGGESTED THAT THE DANGERS FROM "HONEST" COMPETITION OF IDEAS ARE MINIMAL, BUT CALLED ON THE PROPAGANDISTS TO EXPLAIN MATTERS ADEQUATELY TO THE PEOPLE. THIS OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT MEAN THAT BREZHNEV IS READY TO PERMIT DISSENT BUT SIMPLY THAT HE WANTS TO PUT THE BEST FACE ON HIS FOREIGN POLICY (AND TO PUT THE BLAME ON THE PROPAGANDISTS IF THINGS GO WRONG).

4. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT MOSSBACKS, TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE PUBLICLY THEIR VIEWS, AS IN CASE OF RYZHENKO ARTICLE IN PRAVDA. (EMBASSY HAS ASCERTAINED THAT AUTHOR OF ARTICLE WAS FEDOR D. RYZHENKO, RECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN APPOINTMENT WITH HIM HAS LED TO RESPONSE THAT HE IS ILL.)
DUBS

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